

While Sarah Played ...

This story, to me, is more about “what it’s all about” than any I can think of.

I was visiting a school in eastern North Carolina, and was spending time in a prekindergarten classroom. I was sitting on the floor in the block corner, participating in play with several children, and the lead teacher was in the dramatic play area.

Sarah came over to me from dramatic play, holding a pencil in one hand and a restaurant order pad in the other (because her teacher knows to have appropriate writing materials in as many centers as possible). She asked me if I would like to have something to eat.

I told Sarah I would like a steak.

Sarah returned to dramatic play and “whispered” to her teacher, “He wants some steak!”

The teacher said, “Sarah, steak begins with the same letter as your name.”

Sarah wrote something on her pad and brought me a hamburger (they didn’t have any steaks).

After a while, Sarah returned and asked if I would like anything else to eat. I told her I would like some cheesecake.

Sarah returned again to dramatic play and whispered to her teacher, “He wants CHEESECAKE!”

The teacher said, “Sarah, that is a really long word!”

Sarah wrote something else on her pad and brought me a cupcake. (They didn’t have cheesecake either. I thought, “What a great opportunity for a menu-writing project!”)

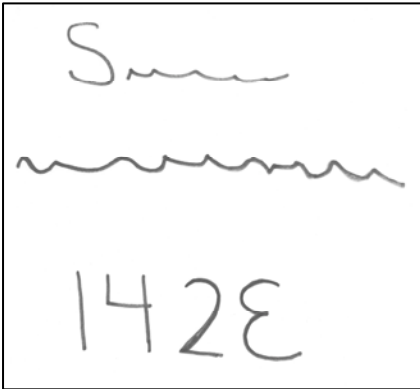
After I “ate” the cupcake, Sarah returned one more time. “Would you like anything else?” she asked.

I told her, “Sarah, I have to go now. Could I please have my bill?”

Sarah stayed right there and wrote something on her pad. Then she tore off the piece of paper from her pad and handed it to me with a flourish.

GO TO THE NEXT PAGE TO SEE WHAT WAS ON SARAH’S PAPER.

This is what was on the paper:



Look at everything Sarah was learning, and what we can learn about Sarah by looking at this paper:

- ✓ She knows the beginning letter of her name.
- ✓ She knows the concept “longer,” and can apply that to the writing of words.
- ✓ She knows that numbers are different from letters, and that they have a different function.

THIS is how children **learn through play** that is **facilitated by capable teachers**.